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VARIATION OF SPECIES IN LITERATURE

If we were to find appended to the familiar poem *Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May* the signature of Jonathan Edwards or Cotton Mather, we should be surprised; and justly, for we should feel that such a production did not represent the characteristics of either of these Puritan divines. And yet this supposititious example is not much more surprising than some of the genuine examples in literature. The chances are that *Ulysses*, if read to a person who was familiar with the typical qualities of Tennyson and Browning but who had not perused this particular poem, would be confidently assigned, not to Tennyson, its real author, but to Browning. Its strong heroic tone, its praise of the strenuous life, in depicting the purpose of Ulysses, already old and crowned with success of adventure, to continue his active life to the end—this is not the Tennyson whom we know. The fact that the poem is so well conceived and executed and that it appeared in the volume of 1842, which made Tennyson famous, suggests that he might have developed in this direction. Carlyle, among others, hoped that he would; but he never did, and the author of *Sartor Resartus* viewed the somewhat effeminate *Idylls of the King* (1859) with leonine scorn. *Ulysses*, then, is almost what would in evolutionary phraseology be termed a “sport,” a sporadic product quite different from its companion poems. To speak of it as characteristic of Tennyson would be to betray inability to appreciate his leading qualities.

So many are these “sports” of literature that some sober account may well be taken of them. This discussion aims to treat a few of the more notable in British and American letters, with a view to suggesting the radical differences between such eccentric products and the typical or normal products of each author. Several classifications of exceptional works might be made: for example, virile works by pretty writers. Under this caption, at the hazard of offending lovers of Tennyson, I venture to place *Ulysses*. If one were to seek something thoroughly characteristic of Tennyson, it would be something like *The Lotus*

Eaters, and ³/₄ *Tears, Idle Tears*, something rather ornate, gently reflective, and not always innocent of suspicion of the sentimental; or, at his best, something like *Sweet and Low* and *Crossing the Bar*, something admirably, almost faultlessly lyric. Indeed, it is upon his really remarkable lyrical gift that critics now seem to agree that his reputation must rest. But sentimentality, sentiment for which there is no adequate basis in reason, if it appears too often in Tennyson's longer poems, has, when skillfully handled, always been popular. Its changes have been rung *ad libitum* in such productions as *Excelsior*, *Maud Muller*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: and the reservoir of human tears apparently remains unappreciably lowered. *Ulysses*, it is true, is by no means a solitary example of Tennyson's escape from his less desirable characteristics: *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, though too rhetorical, reveals much activity and fire; and the splendid strains of *Merlin and the Gleam* (1889) are a recurrence to the *motif* of *Ulysses*. But such poems are rare in Tennyson's volume.

Even more clearly lacking in masculine power, although less handicapped by prettiness and subtle fancifulness of style, is Longfellow. And yet he wrote that puissant and stirring poem *The Skeleton in Armor*, and the rugged if somewhat sentimentalized and didactic *Village Blacksmith*. Probably no one, however, will venture the assertion that these are typical of an author whose favorite adjectives are "gentle," "tender," "meek," "pleasant," "beautiful," "lovely." Compare these with Poe's, "fantastic," "hideous," "ghastly"—all of which occur in the final stanza of *The Haunted Palace*—and a vast difference is discernible. That Longfellow somehow happened to write *The Skeleton in Armor* is therefore no true indication of strength. Both Longfellow and Tennyson had altogether too smooth an existence; what both needed was more contact with active life, with life in its aspect of struggle; they needed to be shaken up. The development of each, as a poet, was in an unfortunate direction. This development might conceivably have been arrested and diverted by different environment. Mr. G. R. Carpenter¹ is

¹ *Life of Longfellow*.

decidedly of this opinion with respect to Longfellow. But no god intervened, and there remain to us only sporadic indications of their splendid possibilities.

Longfellow's incapacity for intense emotion is perhaps best illustrated by the familiar, indeed inevitable, comparison of his picturesque but feeble anti-slavery poems with Whittier's. But it also finds convenient illustration in the death of Gabriel, at the close of *Evangeline*: the utmost that Longfellow can summon to do duty, in this emotional crisis which would have been so congenial to a truly dramatic poet like Browning, is a "cry of terrible anguish." And this same cry of anguish does yeoman service in three passages of *Hiawatha*;² so that finally (to borrow Arnold's phraseology in his opinion of Macaulay's *Lays*) it is hard to read such examples of Longfellow's inadequacy without a cry of pain. Longfellow had a singularly docile temperament—evinced, as an English critic, Mr. Francis Gribble, observes, by his surprising ability to endure and even gain edification from the sermons of commonplace clergymen. *Evangeline* is a typical Longfellow poem—which is not to say that it is a bad poem. But it undeniably falters instead of firmly treading, and there is nowhere in it any hint of the clarion tone. *Weariness* is one of the most exquisite—and there are several which may justly be called exquisite—of Longfellow's poems. And is it too fanciful to discover something characteristic in the theme and treatment? Evidently this is not the Longfellow who wrote *The Skeleton in Armor*; yet the same signature is set to each.

Equally disconcerting is the presence, in the collected works of some author who has made a reputation for power, of pretty trifles or elaborately romantic productions. The authorship of the following song, so brief that it may be quoted entire, would stagger many a reader:—

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
Of labdanum and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair: such balsam falls
Down seaside mountain pedestals,

²XII, l. 98; XX, ll. 114, 133.

From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled ;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With moth and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

This has the savor of Shelley or Keats, especially the latter, on account of its vivid appeal to the senses and its delicate beauty of phrase. It might be Tennyson's, for Tennyson was a disciple of Keats. But it turns out—of all authors!—to be Browning's. Writing in his early twenties while he was yet under the spell of Shelley and Keats, it is quite unlike his characteristic work. Only a few years after writing *Paracelsus* (1835), in which this song occurs, he resolutely shook off influences, as a shaggy Newfoundland dog shakes off drops of water, and became almost wholly original. Yet the smoothness and clarity of style shown in *Paracelsus* might have been retained with salutary results. In ruggedness and in dangerous approaches to obscurity Browning's development as a poet—after the death, in 1861, of his wife, who had drawn him away from such channels—was unfortunate, almost as unfortunate as Tennyson's or Longfellow's, although obviously for quite different reasons. Occasionally, as in *Andrea del Sarto* or *Mulékkeh* he combines this smoothness and clarity with his later qualities, which seems to prove that he could always have written thus clearly had he deemed such treatment possible or desirable for his usual subject-matter.

Browning's earliest long poem, *Pauline* (1833), little known to the general reader—and deservedly so, since the author himself afterward deprecated its publication—is, on account of its length, an even more surprising product than the song *Heap Cassia*. It is stamped throughout with Shelleyan influence. Its very obscurity is a Shelleyan rather than Browningsque obscurity—a resultant of vagueness of thought and fancy, a lack of firm contact with realities, with life. Its thin ethereal quality

is quite different from the noble spirituality of *The Ring and the Book* (1868). There is, however, no serious danger of misrepresenting Browning through *Pauline*, since, as already stated, the poem has been and will doubtless continue to be largely neglected. The danger is very real, on the other hand, in the case of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843). As a drama which is still not infrequently staged and read, this is familiar ground, indeed much too familiar in justice to Browning's fame. Many admirers, though few discriminating admirers, of the poet insist that this play is one of his best productions. Yet to a playgoer who has as yet read nothing of Browning's it gives an unfortunate impression of his qualities and purposes. It is plainly sentimental; and Browning is almost never sentimental. The motivation is inexcusably weak; and ordinarily one of Browning's strongest characteristics is his Shakespearean insight into human motives. The very theme is somewhat morbid, morbid with a touch of that later Elizabethan intensity which marks the plays of Ford; and morbidity is the last characteristic which one commonly associates with Browning. But fortunately the poet of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* is not the true Browning, not the Browning of the first scene of *Pippa Passes*, or *In a Balcony*, or the monologues of Guido, Caponsacchi, Pompilia, and the Pope, in *The Ring and the Book*.

It is not necessary to confine ourselves to poetry in order to obtain further illustrations of this misrepresentative literature. Some of the most modern prose will serve quite as well. What amazement, and perchance consternation or despair, must have sat upon the brows of the admirers of Terence Mulvaney when Kipling published *The Brushwood Boy*!³ No hint had hitherto been vouchsafed of the delicate yet daring fantasy, the dream-atmosphere, of this inimitable story. It is as though Kipling had turned Ariel. That modern Ariel, Shelley, has done nothing which is pinnacled more dim in the intense inane than this tale and its later companion, *They*.⁴ There is abundance of realistic detail in both, which is characteristic of Kipling, but the combi-

³ In *The Day's Work* (1899).

⁴ First published in *Scribner's Magazine*, Aug. 1904.

nation with strangely unreal romance is found in scarcely any other work of his save the inferior study *Wireless*. A bare recital of the plot of *The Brushwood Boy* suffices to show how dissimilar it is to the author's characteristic stories. A young English soldier, of good family, falls in love at first sight—or hearing, rather—with an English girl who, as he is passing through the gardens after a muddy tramp in the country, is singing within the house, at which she is a guest, that beautiful lyric, *Over the Edge of the Purple Down*. He falls in love with her for the reason—not at all surprising, of course—that certain obscure geographical references in her song show that she is the heroine of the strange dreams which he has had on various nights for several years. Obviously, also, she too has similar dreams and knows him in this dream-world, of which he, with an admirable touch of nature which reveals Kipling's insight into humanity, has made a rough map in the most matter-of-fact way. Curiously enough, they have both named the places alike. Hence, having long been lovers in these peculiar dreams, which in all important respects exactly correspond to each other, what more natural than that they should become lovers in real life? And a very satisfactory love story Kipling makes of it—which again is not very characteristic, since ordinarily he ignores the love motive in his tales.

The later story *They* is even more obscure and impalpable. Founded on a blind and childless woman's intense love for children, it proposes the astounding theory of her ability to gather about her, on her wonderfully beautiful estate, the visible ghosts of dead children. These give the title to this exquisite fantasy, which is clearly not for the hasty reader of ordinary magazine stories. A reader with imagination and sympathy is required; and each of these qualities must be possessed to an uncommon degree to ensure comprehension and enjoyment of the story. Indicative as it is of the modern interest in spiritual phenomena, the tale shows Kipling's contact with his time. The realism imparted by the rôle which the motor-car plays in the plot is characteristic; but the production as a whole is uncharacteristic. It reveals little kinship with *Soldiers Three* or *Plain Tales from the Hills*. The robust, boisterous tone

is absent. There is none of that delightfully informal atmosphere of sinewy undress, of half-clad expletives, honest perspiration, and open sin, which is prominent in a typical Kipling story. The author has for once "put on the soft pedal": this is not one of his unabashed, loud-voiced productions. But it is one of his best. And the reader who, after perusing the American magazine in which *They* first appeared, felt cheated, was guilty of lack of appreciation of one of Kipling's loftiest flights. Nevertheless, this outraged reader was right in declaring that this is not the Kipling whom he had come to know. In his typical stories he draws his strength, Antæus-like, from the earth, is almost always close to realities. These two whimsical excursions into the invisible air, though indispensable to some of us, are negligible to the majority of Kipling's readers.

Instances, however, of such delicately beautiful works by authors ordinarily forceful or denunciatory might easily be multiplied. Carlyle, past-master of "Titanic scolding" in *Sartor Resartus* and *Past and Present*, may be viewed in a much tenderer light in his recently published love letters; indeed, in several passages, also, of the two books mentioned. He is moved almost to tears by the spectacle of the typical laboring man, in that really magnificent passage of *Past and Present*, beginning, "All true work is sacred." And the Swift of the delightful *Journal to Stella* is quite another Swift than the author of *Gulliver's Travels* or the *Tale of a Tub*. Mr. Jack London, it is true, has not yet written a novel which does not have as its main *motif* the praise of savage strength; but it is conceivable that he may some day misrepresent himself by doing so.

Any author has a natural and inalienable right, of course, to exhibit variety. Much of this discussion, therefore, may seem to be mere quibbling. But it is immediately to be noted that, if the author have this heaven-born privilege, he does not commonly avail himself of it. His paths are generally well marked; we know his comings and goings. It is only an occasional genius like Shakespeare who may roam at will from Caliban to Rosalind, from Iago to Hamlet, and from London to the sea-coast of Bohemia. Yet even Shakespeare has so misrepresented

himself in at least one play, *Titus Andronicus* (1594?), as to lead some critics to deny his authorship of it. The plot is indeed so bloody and revolting—one scene involving the entrance of the heroine, Lavinia, with her tongue cut out and with only bleeding stumps of wrists—that it is far from Shakespearean. It is undeniably Shakespeare's, none the less, as has been recently proved,⁵ and is a reworking and condensation of two earlier English plays. The probable explanation is that a dramatic manager requested Shakespeare to revamp the story, on account of the popularity of bloody plots in that period, shortly after 1590, and that the great dramatist, not then a man of notable reputation, despite reluctance to treat such uncongenial material, consented. That the task was uncongenial there can be little doubt. But this was probably not the only play which he produced by request; and all of the suspected ones (including *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Pericles*, and *Timon of Athens*) are inferior to his average work. *Romeo and Juliet* (1591, revised 1595?), moreover, is not a representative tragedy in one respect: it makes use of the element of chance, deserting for once the Shakespearean theory that each man is himself the architect of his own fate. All the later tragedies, however, illustrate this theory. Plainly, then, *Romeo* does not correctly represent Shakespeare as a writer of tragedies. This is not variety, but failure to exhibit his normal characteristics. And *Titus* is a much more forcible illustration of such failure. Bloody scenes and unnatural horrors of all sorts are characteristic enough of the decadent period from 1620 to 1640, when the unusual was sought at all costs because a new thrill must be provided for the jaded playgoers. Ford will furnish more examples than any healthy-minded modern reader will relish. But it would be strange indeed to find Shakespeare willingly putting his hand to such gutter-work. It is not surprising, therefore, that critics, and good critics, moreover, should on internal evidence have rejected *Titus* as non-Shakespearean. It contains some unmistakably Shakespearean passages, it is

⁵H. de W. Fuller, "The Sources of *Titus Andronicus*," in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. XVI, No. 1.

true, which should have warned critics to beware of judgment from plot and general characteristics; but it is quite unworthy of Shakespeare.

An author, then, may display variety while still preserving certain unmistakable characteristics; or he may quite desert his field. When a poet like Walt Whitman informs us, in an unnecessarily blatant fashion, that as for rhyme and metre he will have none of them, and then produces a sporadic lyric like *Captain, My Captain*, perfectly regular in both respects, and admirable in all respects, we are justified in repeating the well-worn quotation on consistency. The schoolboy who should declaim this poem would be grieved to find, upon turning to the author's collected works, that Whitman had apparently followed the advice of that famous Western jury: "Not guilty, but don't do it again!" Whitman frequently approaches regularity in his metre, it is true, although he affects to scorn it; but he almost never uses rhyme. Moreover, *Captain, My Captain* is free from those vicious eccentricities and mannerisms of phraseology which are characteristic of him—colloquial terms cheek by jowl with elevated phrase, meaningless cataloguing, vulgar imagery; in fine, serious lack of a sense of values. Hence this lyric gives one no correct conception of Whitman's poetic attitude and accomplishment. It is an alien, almost an intruder. If a reader wishes to know the real Whitman in a brief poem, he should peruse such a production as the one characteristically entitled *To You*. This reveals none of his worst perversities of expression, represents fairly his treatment of his leading theme, democracy, and includes an admirable passage glorifying the divine elements in the average man. Yet in the case of *Captain, My Captain*, as in Tennyson's *Ulysses*, the uncharacteristic poem is nevertheless one of the author's very best. In the case of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Browning's *Blot in the 'Scutcheon* this is not true.

Sometimes a writer who has produced almost nothing but humorous stories of a pronounced and even unique type will puzzle his readers by an entirely serious, perhaps sinister, study in the tragic side of life. This has been done by Mr. W. W.

Jacobs. *The Monkey's Paw*,⁶ a strangely powerful suggestion of the spirit world, is quite out of the field of the chaffing of the night watchman and Ginger Dick. Yet it is quite as good of its kind.

Chaucer was also a humorist and he likewise wrote serious tales. In fact, he so divided his attention that a serious study cannot be said to be uncharacteristic of him. Yet his serious works differ greatly in kind and value, and at least one or two, like the *Parson's Tale* and Chaucer's own tale of *Melibæus*, are undeniably stupid, probably for the excellent reason that they were intended to be stupid, the former as being dramatically appropriate, and the latter as Chaucer's joke on himself. But one which has hitherto seemed somewhat stupid to the-not-too-slavishly devout Chaucerian scholar and which has therefore sometimes been thought curiously unrepresentative of its author, has in a recent article been declared satirical in intent. Viewed from this standpoint, after some rubbing of eyes, *The Legend of Good Women*, as interpreted by Professor H. C. Goddard,⁷ is discovered to be possibly more satisfactory than if it be deemed entirely serious. The unfortunately chosen examples of "good" women, such as Cleopatra and Dido, turn out to be malicious rather than clumsy: Chaucer was never clumsy. And the occasional lines which disconcertingly seemed to be humorous turn out to be in all probability actually humorous. This, one thinks, might have been suspected from the fact that few or no such suspicious lines occur in a genuinely pathetic Chaucerian production like *The Clerk's Tale*. The result, therefore, of Professor Goddard's keen analysis seems to be a needed justification of Chaucer as a literary artist. It is gratifying to find, also, that several noted literary scholars have enthusiastically accepted the theory.

We are seemingly brought to a halt, however, in studying variations from type, by not a few writers whose literary activity is divided into two distinct periods, the works of the two periods

⁶In *The Lady of the Barge, and Other Stories*.

⁷"Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*." Reprinted from the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Oct. 1908, Jan. 1909.

being astonishingly dissimilar. The nature of the subject-matter changes from painting to sociology, or from the ideal to the practical, or from pure story telling to scientific analysis and philosophical speculation. The spirit changes from profound spiritual melancholy to jaunty acceptance of the conventional world, or from the melodramatic exhibition of a bleeding heart to pungent and exhaustless satire. These are no figments of the brain but genuine examples from nineteenth-century literature. What, in such cases, is representative? Are the two periods reconcilable? Why did the author change his characteristic attitude?

In 1860 John Ruskin turned abruptly, and to most of his readers inexplicably, from art to social reform. Up to that time he had written the five volumes of *Modern Painters* (1843-60), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and the *Stones of Venice* (1851-53). He now produced in rapid succession *Unto This Last* (1860), *Munera Pulveris* (1863), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), and *Time and Tide* (1868), all of which fiercely arraigned existing social and economic conditions. Moreover, his style changed from the ornate to the simple, from the involved to the forthright, from the delicate to the denunciatory. If asked which period he wished to be considered representative of him, Ruskin himself would doubtless have answered, "the second." In effect, he made this answer many times. Yet the majority of his readers still cling a little more fondly to the art works, and persist in regarding Ruskin as a "fine writer"—"meaning," he indignantly declared, "that no one need mind what I say!" The truth is that, intense lover of beauty though he seemed, Ruskin was never interested purely in art; the moral in art was what chiefly attracted him. He denounced sham in a painting as Carlyle denounced it in persons. He urges us to beware of deceit in architecture, of false fronts and thin veneers. One of his best critics, Mr. J. A. Hobson,⁸ declares that if one reads the chapter on the nature of Gothic, in the *Seven Lamps*, Ruskin's tendency already appears in embryo, and that a perusal of the *Stones of Venice* shows his whole policy

⁸ John Ruskin, *Social Reformer* (1898).

of social reform to be inevitable. Clearly, then, Ruskin was right in feeling that the works of his second period are profoundly characteristic. No thoughtful man could in those years escape the Victorian current of speculation. It reappears in George Eliot's transition from genuine narrative in *Adam Bede* (1859), her best novel *qua* novel, to philosophy and science in *Middlemarch* (1872).

Matthew Arnold's work presents at first sight an even more puzzling problem than Ruskin's. It has been well said that no one would suspect that Arnold's poetry and his prose were written by the same man. The former, composed almost wholly in his earlier life, is colored by agnostic melancholy, relieved by extremely beautiful nature setting; the sharpest contrast between the two is visible in *Dover Beach*. Human life, in this poetic period, is an "uncongenial place." And in that mournfully exquisite poem, *Resignation*, even nature, in many of its aspects, "seems to bear rather than rejoice." Rest from strife, the serenity of twilight and moonlight, receive the poet's praise. Yet in Arnold the writer of prose these notes almost never reappear. He has frankly accepted the world. Urbane, open-minded, witty, merciless to sham and pretence, he goes forth to reform society. His jaunty air of assurance, his brisk optimism, above all the thoroughly practical atmosphere of the man, fill us with astonishment. Can the same author have written *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) and *Dover Beach*? Yet, beginning with the lectures *On Translating Homer* (1859), he maintained essentially the same qualities throughout his prose period. And after he began to write important prose he wrote very little poetry.

Here was a clear though somewhat gradual transition, the causes of which are still a trifle obscure. Some critics believe that when his prose period opened he had settled his conflicts of the spirit and had left religious melancholy behind him. Others hold that Arnold's own comments, in his letters, deserve attention, and that they show that his prosaic duties of thirty years as inspector of schools had pathetically dimmed the poetic flame. He tells us, for example, in one letter, that he feels himself growing old amid a press of occupations for which, after

all, he was not born; and in another, that he is only doing what thousands of others could do just as well, and that for the things which he really loves and for which he has real ability he has no time. Yet if he had no leisure for poetry he contrived to do a deal of work in prose; and in the pages of his prose there is no note of regret. He was no longer a child of revolution, "beating in the air his luminous wings in vain." As Mr. Lewis E. Gates⁹ observes, the secret of Arnold's personality, as evinced in his prose, is reconciliation of conventionality with fineness of spiritual temper. He became, in the best sense of a much-abused phrase, a man of the world. But one may not therefore calmly dismiss his whole body of poetry as misrepresentative.

Another man of the world, in a different sense, was Lord Byron. At the present time there is no longer any question as to which of *his* works represent him properly. This man was always at bottom a satirist and a mocker. His affectation of melancholy and pretended love of solitude in *Childe Harold* (1812-18) and other engaging romantic poems was largely commercial. It deceived and intrigued the public, and resulted in vast sales. Even in his best passages of this period, such as the justly famous "There was a sound of revelry by night," there lurks something of the theatrical. His style is always approaching the declamatory. How he must have laughed in his sleeve at the gullible public, and at equally gullible critics like Jeffrey, who declared that in the sentiments of his corsairs and cutthroats there was a tone of "dreadful sincerity"! Finally, sated with adulation and aided by the undeniable sting of ostracism from London society, he deserted melodrama for satire, and produced (1818-24) that characteristic masterpiece, *Don Juan*. In this he throws off the mask of a blighted being, ill-treated by destiny and the world, and with reckless sincerity and Elizabethan frankness gives us the real Lord Byron's opinions of the universe. Such a wonderful ease breathes from these stanzas as is nowhere visible in *Childe Harold*. His long-filled vials of mockery are unstopped; it is Swift *redivivus*. The story element is less prominent than in *Gulliver*, which is

⁹ *Three Studies in Literature* (1899).

read with delight by children without suspicion of its mordant satire. *Don Juan* with Don Juan left out would lose but little. The poem is a long series of digressions; Byron frolics about like a once-caged animal at liberty. There are passages of altogether delightful chaffing. But nothing is sacred to this disillusioned spirit, this leader, as Southey dubbed him, of the "Satanic school." His rain of Parthian shafts at London and the world, as he hastens from them to the precipice of his early death, is unexampled in modern poetry. Brilliancy is inadequate as a characterization of some of those consummate verses of mockery.

And combined with this mockery is the really romantic, if too thin and carelessly developed, story of the hero, Don Juan. The real Byron, in short, was a romantic satirist. He had always been a warm admirer of Pope, and had cordially despised Wordsworth and Coleridge. His first important poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), had been a satire in heroic couplets, occasioned by unfavorable reviews of his early volume, *Hours of Idleness*, which was indeed nearly worthless. Then for nine years, he changed his field, not reappearing in satire until the publication of *Beppo* (1818). But the alpha and omega of his career were satirical. This was his natural bent, disguise it how he might. The emphasis once placed on *Childe Harold* and its companion poems is now seen to have been wrongly placed. Save in the descriptions of the various monuments of Greece and Rome, which show for the first and almost the only time the element of reverence in this irreverent revolutionist, and in a few other separable passages, these poems of his middle period reveal upon a searching examination little but fustian. That they could once deceive is a tribute to Byron the actor. But the best poetry, as Arnold reminded us, is inviolable to charlatanism; and Byron's best poetry, his representative poetry, is satire colored by romance. In this respect, therefore, *Don Juan* is even more characteristic than *English Bards*.

Difficult though it may be, then, to estimate the real man, to detach his real characteristics, there will probably be little question of the value of such discrimination. If an author

possessed certain good qualities which he failed to develop, it is important to note this, and to ascertain, if possible, why he did not develop in this direction. As in science, environment often plays a part; and still more often, that line of least resistance which leads indolent man to cultivate those qualities which are easiest to cultivate, or which, perhaps sometimes deceiving himself, he believes to be native to his genius. Variations from type, however, are not in literature, as in science, very frequently progressive. A new species of poetry or prose does not commonly arise by such means, but by a general, a national, and often an international movement. Yet the influence of a great writer on lesser ones is in many cases so powerful and so far-reaching that a variation for the better in the one would have affected the many also. Hence it is that one laments the failure of Tennyson to develop the masculine qualities which he early revealed in *Ulysses*; and of Whitman to conform to those laws of metre and rhyme the salutary restraint of which would possibly have improved his chaos of poetry, over which a noble spirit of creation broods but which remains still unfinished.

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